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ABSTRACT

This annual publication presents articles that describe a sample of exemplary transfer practices at Virginia's colleges and universities. The articles are designed to increase understanding of how institutions communicate information and facilitate transfer between two-year and four-year institutions. An overview, "Transfer in Virginia- An Update," discusses several very useful tools available to assist students in making informed course selections while they are attending the community colleges and Richard Bland College, and notes that many four-year colleges and universities now offer guaranteed admissions to students who earn a transfer-oriented degree. The first article examines "Web sites as Sources of Transfer Information." "Transferability of the General Studies Degree" is an article that discusses a degree commonly offered by community colleges for students who come to college with credits accumulated from other colleges or through experience. Not all of these degrees are eligible for transfer, but the article lists the colleges that offer transfer-eligible general studies degrees. The last article of this newsletter, "Examples of Exemplary Programs," highlights colleges and universities throughout Virginia that have exemplary programs facilitating transfer between two- and four-year institutions. Included at the end of the newsletter is a list of Virginia's Chief Transfer Officers (1998-99). (VWC)

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Virginia Community College System

SCHEV STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA

TRANSFER CONNECTION

An annual publication of the State Committee on Transfer December 1998

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TRANSFER IN VIRGINIA - AN UPDATE

Students who transfer from Virginia's community colleges and Richard Bland College have enhanced opportunities to gain acceptance to the college or university of their choice, to have all or most of their credits accepted, and to have all general education requirements fulfilled at the school to which they transfer. Only a college or university in compliance with the State Policy on Transfer will grant junior standing and credit for completion of all lower level general-education requirements to students who earn transfer-oriented associate degrees at the Virginia community colleges and Richard Bland College. At the end of the 1997-98 academic year, all public colleges and universities in Virginia except Virginia Military Institute, were in full compliance with the State Policy on Transfer.

Several very useful tools are available to assist students in making informed course selections while they are attending the community colleges and Richard Bland College. All public four-year colleges and universities and many private institutions have published transfer guides which provide specific course and program information that students can use in choosing classes that are guaranteed to transfer. In addition, most institutions now provide transfer information, including their transfer guides, on their home pages on the World Wide Web. These can be accessed through the home page for the Virginia Community College System at: **http://www.so.cc.va.us/transfer.htm**. The Transfer Module continues to be of use to community college students who plan to transfer after one year of study. The module lists selected VCCS courses commonly transferred throughout Virginia. Students who select courses from this module can be assured that their credits will be accepted by at least 80% of the public four-year institutions in the Commonwealth.

Another very important development in the transfer process is that many four-year colleges and universities now offer guaranteed admissions to community college and Richard Bland students who earn a transfer-oriented degree. Through special articulation agreements, many colleges, both public and private, also will accept applied science degrees in selected programs.

All public colleges and universities, and most private institutions, have designated a staff member as the Chief Transfer Officer. These individuals provide transfer information to their campuses and resolve any problems that arise. The State Committee on Transfer meets annually with the Chief Transfer Officers to assess the progress that has been made and to identify areas that still need attention.

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It is easier than ever for students to attend a community college or Richard Bland College for a year or two and then transfer to the college or university of their choice without losing any credits. Virginians who wish to continue their education after high school have many opportunities, and the transfer connection is an important and accessible route for all of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

This newsletter presents articles that describe a sample of exemplary practices in transfer at Virginia's colleges and universities. The articles are designed to increase understanding of how institutions communicate information and facilitate transfer between two-year and four-year institutions.

Websites as Sources of Transfer Information

Several interesting websites for transfer information about Virginia's colleges and universities can be accessed through the Virginia Community College System's home page at **http://www.so.cc.va.us/transfer.htm**. For example, at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, a tool was developed called the Transfer Assistance Profile (TAP). TAP allows JSRCC students to import their transcripts and match their courses against various degree requirements at participating four-year institutions. Northern Virginia Community College created the Transfer Resources web page **(www.nv.cc.va.us)** to provide access. The College of William and Mary **(www.wm.edu)** also developed a web page that will allow students to input courses that they have taken from community colleges and receive an on-line evaluation before they apply to four-year public institutions.

The Transfer Resources web page at Northern Virginia Community College was created to provide access to general transfer information and resources for NVCC students. The page also provides links to commercial sites such as Peterson's Educational websites for advice on writing a good essay or opportunities for studying abroad; Resource Pathways for admissions and financial aid information; and the Princeton Review, Wehrli's, and U.S. News & World Report websites for college rankings.

Several models of transfer websites from other states include the University of Texas at Austin, which publishes four years of transfer guide information, the current academic year, and the previous three years on the web **(www.utexas.edu)**. Those at Arizona State University **(www.asu.edu)** and Illinois State University **(www.ilstu.edu)** provide comprehensive resources for assessing transferability of credits from community colleges, and Illinois' centralized transfer website **(www.itransfer.org)** provides access electronically to the kinds of resources typically provided in Virginia by Chief Transfer Officers.

The Internet is a powerful tool, and for those who are interested in transferring from two-year to four-year institutions, websites should be considered a primary source of transfer information. They are easily accessible, often more accurate than other forms of print-based information, and can potentially save time and money by assisting students with the selection of courses appropriate to meet their educational goals.

Transferability of the General Studies Degree

Many community colleges in Virginia offer a degree in General Studies, a nontraditional degree that generally is not treated under the State Policy on Transfer as a transfer degree, but that serves the special needs of some transfer students. The curriculum often is designed for students who have accumulated credits through a variety of formal and experiential sources and wish to structure a program to suit their individual needs. The degree is used more commonly by community colleges to tailor a program to meet specific requirements of the four-year institution to which the student is transferring.

While these degrees normally offer students more flexibility in selecting courses than traditional transfer degrees, several community colleges have restricted their General Studies degrees to only those courses that are commonly transferable to most four-year colleges and universities. In these cases, the State Committee on Transfer has reviewed the curriculum and designated the degree as a transfer degree subject to the terms of the State Policy on Transfer.

The General Studies degrees at the following community colleges have been designated as transfer degrees:

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
Lord Fairfax Community College
Mountain Empire Community College
Patrick Henry Community College
Piedmont Community College
Southside Community College
Virginia Western Community College
Wytheville Community College

Examples of Exemplary Programs

Colleges and universities throughout Virginia are engaged in facilitating transfer between two-year and four-year institutions. Many institutions have exemplary programs which are highlighted in this portion of the newsletter.

★★★★

JSRCC's Baccalaureate Transition Program

The Baccalaureate Transition Program (BTP) is an academic and retention program at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College designed for first year minority students who plan to transfer to a four-year college or university. The purpose of the program is to recruit students committed to academic success and to retain them until they have received their associate degrees. Students in the program must be from Richmond or the surrounding area and must have recently graduated from high school with a minimum grade point average of 2.00. Program participants, with the program coordinator attend weekly individual meetings and monthly group meetings, and complete a teacher assistant internship in a local middle or elementary school.

Developing well-rounded, informed, and resourceful students is an important objective of this program. These students receive first hand information regarding flexible employment, scholarship, work-study opportunities, and a host of other resources available in the Richmond area. They are also given an opportunity to tour Virginia colleges and speak to admissions counselors.

From the inception of this program in 1995, the student retention rate has exceeded 80% and students have remained in good academic standing.

★★★★

University of Richmond and JSRCC Partnership for Minority Students

In 1985, the Robbins School of Business at the University of Richmond entered into a transfer partnership with J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College to recruit minority students, and invited JSRCC students majoring in Business Administration to compete for academic scholarships. Funds were provided by Richmond-based corporations and the university's foundation to support this program. To date, the University of Richmond has awarded one million dollars in scholarship and financial aid.

The partnership's real challenge was for UR faculty and staff to examine the traditional culture of the university and create an environment in which nontraditional students could succeed. For JSRCC faculty and staff, the challenge was to prepare community college students for the new environment. Through their joint efforts, an atmosphere has been created where economically disadvantaged, single parents, and working students can feel academically confident and socially accepted. To date, of the 27 students who transferred to the University of Richmond from JSRCC, 20 have graduated and three expect to graduate in May 1999.

★★★★

Four-year Degree Programs Offered at Two-year College Campuses

Partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions make it possible for many community college students to transfer into bachelor's degree programs without having to leave their community college. For example, a special partnership between Radford University and Virginia Western Community College makes it easy for community college students to earn certain RU bachelor's degrees without leaving Roanoke. Most of the classes are taught in a classroom setting by RU faculty, allowing personal contact between the instructor and the student. A RU representative works on the VWCC campus full-time to provide information and assistance for students who wish to apply their VWCC degrees to one of several RU bachelor degree programs offered in the Roanoke Valley. In addition, VWCC graduates who wish to enroll on the main campus at Radford may be admitted under the partnership agreement.

Through its distance-learning Teletechnet program, Old Dominion University offers bachelor's degrees on site at all twenty-three of Virginia's community colleges. Using state-of-the-art technology, students are able not only to hear their ODU professors, but also to interact with them in classroom discussions. Registration, financial aid, and advising are all available to students through ODU site directors, who also help with testing, program auditing, and course materials. One major benefit of ODU's Teletechnet program is that few classes ever have to be canceled. With broadcasts to many sites, very few students have to be enrolled at any one community college for the class to run--something that may not be possible with traditional instructional methods.

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Longwood College and SVCC: Partners in Education

Beginning in the fall of 1997, Southside Virginia Community College students who complete the Associate in Arts and Sciences degree, and fulfill all the necessary criteria of the Dual Degree Program, will be guaranteed admission as juniors to their choice of majors at Longwood College. The Longwood-SsVCC Dual Degree Program also guarantees that graduates will have fulfilled their general education requirements; that housing will be provided at Longwood; and that certain student benefits will be extended to program participants prior to enrollment at Longwood, including registration, orientation, advising, libray access, and student activities. Students are guaranteed that the Longwood degree requirements will be honored for program participants for three years after Dual Degree Program enrollment.

★★★★

Transcript Exchange -- A SPEEDE/ExPRESS Process

Radford University, New River Community College, and Virginia Western Community College are collaborating on a joint project to exchange transcript information electronically. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is a technology that can be used to replace paper transcripts of student information by using structured data formats and software to move data electronically between two institutions. In education, EDI is often referred to as SPEEDE/ExPRESS.

As Trading partners, RU, VWCC, and NRCC are hoping to realize a number of benefits from the new system, all of which will facilitate transfer between the institutions:

Time savings in getting transcripts from one college to another
Increased accuracy and integrity of the data
Improved assurances of confidentiality of data
Cost savings in replacing manual with electronic systems

The Virginia Community College System hopes to partner in the near future with other four-year colleges and universities, and eventually to extend the process to secondary schools to facilitate admissions for first-time enrolled students.

★★★★

Virginia Tech Sponsors A Transfer Conference

Virginia Tech sponsored a statewide conference in 1997-98 to provide opportunities for VCCS faculty, administrators, advisors, counselors, and Chief Transfer Officers to discuss transfer issues with colleagues from the university. Over one hundred faculty and administrators from Virginia Tech and the community colleges discussed problems, partnerships, and future directions in facilitating transfer. The full-day program included faculty dialogues on curricular issues, course syllabi, distance learning, and instructional technology. All participants were given a compendium of course syllabi for freshman and sophomore courses and information on the performance of community college students who transfer to Virginia Tech.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Elizabeth McClanahan, former Chairman, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, who congratulated participants on the work being done to assist students in achieving their goals for higher education. Ms McClanahan stressed the importance of early intervention to identify potential problems and the need for resources to provide quality counseling and advising services. Ms McClanahan also noted the cost savings to both the student and the Commonwealth when students complete the first two years at a community college before transferring to a four-year college or university.

★★★★

Student Handbooks Supplement Transfer Guides

A number of community colleges supplement four-year institution transfer guides with student handbooks, brochures and other publications designed to prepare students for transfer into specific majors. For example, Engineering students at the Virginia Beach campus of Tidewater Community College are given an engineering handbook that details specific courses required for the A.S. degree in Engineering, and lists appropriate electives for computer, electrical, mechanical, civil and environmental engineering majors at various four-year colleges and universities in Virginia. Students interested in transfer are encouraged to contact their college's Chief Transfer Officer to identify the full range of information resources available to assist them in their planning.

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Reprints Available for Answering Transfer Questions

Reprints are available of two popular articles that appeared in past issues of *The Transfer Connection*: "When Is a Credit Not a Credit?--Understanding How Credits Transfer" and "But Nobody Told Me That--Student Responsibilities in Getting Accurate Transfer Information." If you would like additional copies of these two articles, please send your request to:

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